

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05
MCT-01 A-01 OPR-02 DHA-02 /067 W
-----072231Z 108595 /61

R 072145Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3068
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 0099

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, ES
SUBJECT: ANOTHER HIGH RANSOM KIDNAPPING PULLED OFF

1. SAN SALVADOR HAS EXPERIENCED YET ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL KIDNAPPING OF A MEMBER OF ONE OF ITS WEALTHY FAMILIES. THE VICTIM WAS A YOUNG DOCTOR, MARIANO CASTRO MAGANA, WHO WAS TAKEN FROM HIS PARENTS HOME IN POSH SAN BENITO RESIDENTIAL AREA BY FIVE ARMED MEN ON JANUARY 3. THREE DAYS LATER HE WAS RELEASED UNHARMED. THE PRESS CLAIMS THE FAMILY PAID TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN RANSOM. AS HAS BEEN THE RULE IN SUCH CASES SINCE 1971 REGALADO DUENAS KIDNAPPING ENDED IN DEATH OF VICTIM, THE FAMILY DID NOT GO TO THE AUTHORITIES BUT HANDLED ALL NEGOTIATIONS FOR PAYMENT DIRECTLY AND IN SECRET WITH THE KIDNAPPERS. IN THIS INSTANCE, HOWEVER, THE FACTS WERE KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC DURING UNFOLDING OF CASE, AND CASTRO MAGANA HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIS RELEASE TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE.

2. VARIOUS PRESS STORIES ASSERT THAT ONE OR ANOTHER POLITICAL TERRORIST GROUP CLAIMED CREDIT FOR THE OPERATION. ONE STORY
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HAD THE FRENTE POPULAR REVOLUCIONARIO (FPL) AS THE CULPRIT, WHILE ANOTHER IDENTIFIED A GROUP CALLING ITSELF FUERZAS ARMADAS DE LA REVOLUCION (FARN).

3. SOME TWO MONTHS AGO, A SIMILAR KIDNAPPING WAS CARRIED OUT IN WHICH THE INVOLVED FAMILY HELD THINGS SO CLOSE THAT THE STORY NEVER REACHED THE PUBLIC. RAMON GADALA MARIA, MEMBER OF A PROMINENT

AND WEALTHY MANUFACTURING FAMILY, WAS TAKEN FROM HIS HOME
AND RELEASED AFTER TWO WEEKS OF HARD BARGINING BETWEEN HIS FAMILY
AND THE KIDNAPPERS. THAT RANSOM WAS ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

4. COMMENT : THE EMBASSY HAS THE ESSENTIALS OF BOTH CASES FROM
FAMILY MEMBERS. ALTHOUGH BOTH HAD OVERTONES OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL
MOTIVATIONS, NEITHER RELEASE INVOLVED ANYTHING BESIDES MONEY.
GADALA MARIA CLAIMED THAT HIS CAPTORS WERE GUATEMALANS WHO NEEDED
MONEY TO FINANCE SUBVERSIVE OPERATIONS THERE. ON WHAT BASIS
HE CONCLUDED THIS IS UNKNWON. (THE GADALA MARIA BROTHER WHO
NEGOTIATED THE TERMS OF RELEASE CAME FROM GUATEMALA
ALSO.) THE EMBASSY IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE KIDNAPPERS
ARE MOST LIKELY CRIMINALLY, RATHER THAN POLITICALLY, MOTIVATED.

5. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER KIDNAPPINGS WHICH
HAVE NOT COME TO EMBASSY'S ATTENTION. WE DOUBT THIS, HOWEVER,
GIVEN THE DIFFICULTY OF KEEPING SUCH SECRETS IN LOCAL AMBIENT,
AND TENDENCY OF WEALTHY FAMILIES TO TALK WITH EMBASSY CONTACTS
WHEN SOMETHING MAKES THEM SKITTISH. THESE TWO KIDNAPPINGS BRING
TOTAL OVER PAST TWO YEARS TO HALF DOZEN MARK. TO DATE ALL VICTIMS
HAVE BEEN (1) CIVILIANS (2) WEALTHY AND (3) SALVADORANS.

LOZANO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, NEGOTIATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE, TERRORISTS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770171/aaaackbh.tel
Line Count: 85
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Message ID: 638f30dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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Subject: ANOTHER HIGH RANSOM KIDNAPPING PULLED OFF
TAGS: PINS, ES, (CASTRO MAGANA, MARIANO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/638f30dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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